

Shark Valley Essay Winner – 2010.

Dominic, 4th Grade

Frank C. Martin K-8 Center

The Everglades is special in countless ways. I feel extremely fortunate that it is only a car ride away. I'd be as upset as a toddler in a hissy-fit if it was gone.

If the Everglades were not in existence, South Florida would have little water. The water in the Everglades used to come from Lake Okeechobee when it overflowed, but now canals drain that water on the left and right of the lake. Today, the Everglades get its water mostly from rain and less from Lake Okeechobee. The Everglades is like a sponge sucking up water. When I visited the Everglades I didn't see much water, but when my ranger squeezed the algae on the ground, out came almost a pint of clear water. The Everglades is like a watery sanctuary.

A rustle in the bushes, a plop in the water, what could it be? The Everglades has a variety of endangered animals. All animals in the Everglades are safe and the endangered ones are especially protected by specific environmental laws. The law states that you cannot harm the endangered animals or their habitats. One endangered animal in the Everglades is the roseate spoonbill, it gets its name from its spoon like bill. Like all the other animals in the Everglades, it is free to roam forever.

Due to the fact that the Everglades is a National Park, only people who are off their rockers litter. All people who dare to do it and are caught are fined a large amount of money. They could even go to jail for harming an animal's habitat. When I went there, the rangers told me that we can't even think of littering. No one in their right mind would litter in the Everglades.

There is no place on earth like the Everglades. It is Florida's duty and privilege to protect the Everglades and keep this special place. I'm so lucky to have seen a small portion of the glades with my own eyes.